



**PO Box 200701 Helena, MT 59620-0701
(406) 444-9939**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

1. Project Title: Pondera Shooting Sports Club (PSSC)

2. Type of Proposed Action: Add a protective wall and extend the roof of the clubhouse.

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action: The Pondera Shooting Sports Gun Club is leased from Pondera County, Montana. The initial tract of land is two and one half (2.5) acres located in the SW $\frac{1}{4}$, NE $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 22, Township 28 North, Range 3 West. The property is approximately 300 feet square and lying in the southwest corner of the above described property. An additional one acre located due west of the county leased portion had been donated from the Mary Ellen Brownell trust, for the parking area. Total property increased to approximately 3.5 acres (See figures 1 & 2).



Figure 1 – Pondera Shooting Sports Club Area Map



Figure 2 – Pondera Shooting Sports Club (PSSC) southwest of Conrad airport.



Figure 3 – Eastside of clubhouse showing gutters/downspouts to be moved, existing concrete pad and location of roof extension/lean-to.

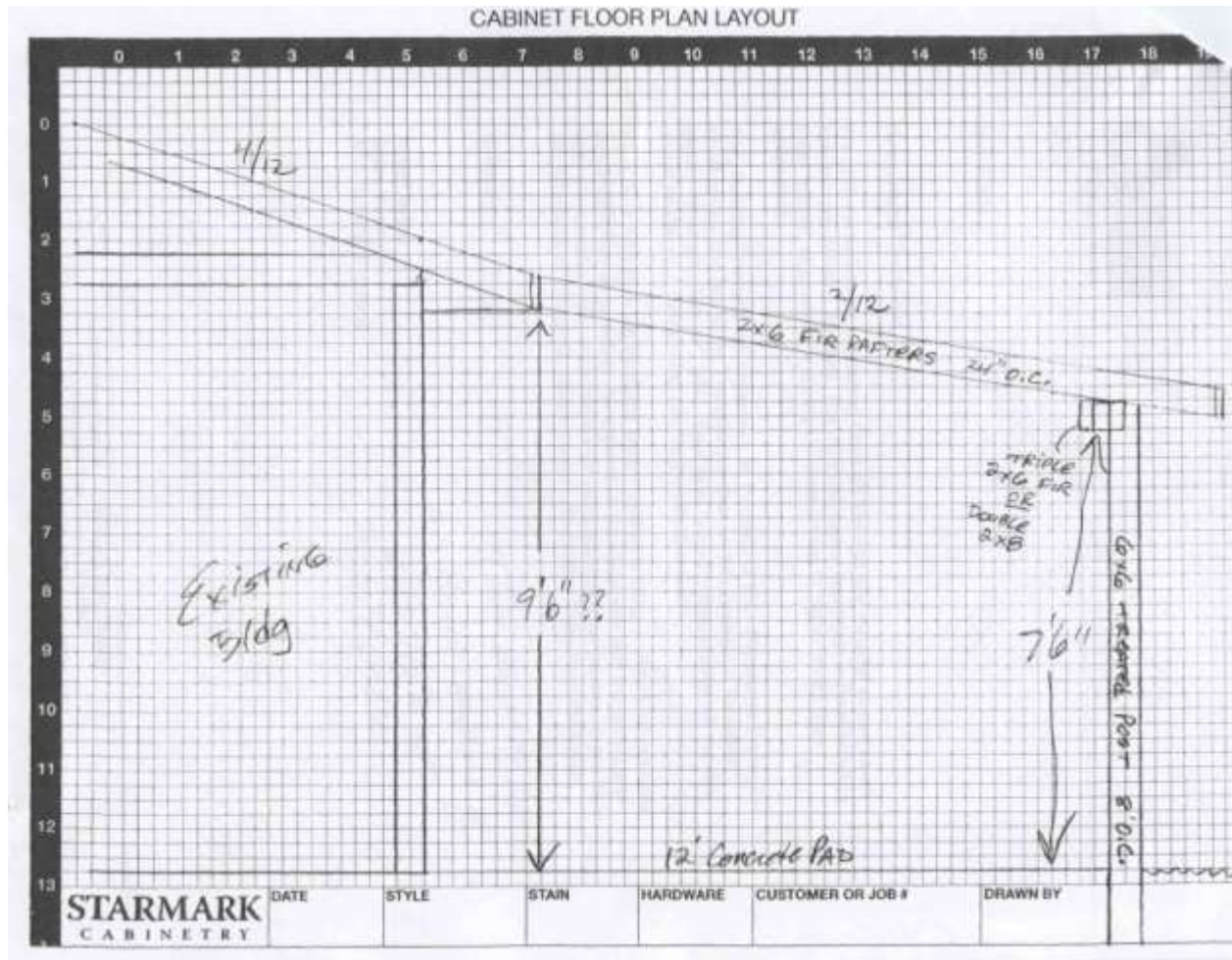


Figure 4 – Diagram of roof extension/lean-to.

4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action: MCA 87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) and MCA 87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices). The Montana Legislature has authorized funding for the establishment of a Shooting Range Development Program providing financial assistance for the development of shooting ranges. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) has responsibility for the administration of the program, including the necessary guidelines and procedures governing applications for funding assistance under the program.

To be eligible for grant assistance, a private shooting club or a private organization:

- (a)(i) shall accept in its membership any person who holds or is eligible to hold a Montana hunting license and who pays club or organization membership fees;
- (ii) may not limit the number of members;
- (iii) may charge a membership fee not greater than the per-member share of the club's or organization's reasonable cost of provision of services, including establishment, improvement, and maintenance of shooting facilities and other membership services; and
- (iv) shall offer members occasional guest privileges at no cost to the member or invited guest and shall make a reasonable effort to hold a public sight-in day each September, when the general public may use the shooting

range for a day-use fee or at no cost; or
(b) shall admit the general public for a reasonable day-use fee.

5. Need for the Action(s): The east entrance to the Shooting Sports Club drifts heavily with snow and needs protection. Additionally there is not an adequate sheltered place for trap shooters to stage or wait during competition. There is a need to provide an area for the safety, convenience and comfort of shooters and spectators during league and competition shoots.

6. Objectives for the Action(s): To provide a protected entrance from snow and ice, and a safe, convenient and comfortable area for shooters to stage during shooting events. The area also needs to have direct access and unobstructed view of the trap fields. Construction of a wall and roof extension will satisfy these objectives.

7. Project Size: estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:

The proposed improvements are a much smaller area than the total acreage and will be within the leased properties at club house.

8. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project):

The area affected is the existing Conrad Gun Club which has been in place for many years and is located just southwest of Conrad, MT and south of the Conrad Airport. Range is built upon former agricultural land and is surrounded on three sides by cropland. The south side is Granite Road and to the immediate south on Granite Road is more cropland. The Conrad Airport is located north of the club with cropland between. (See Figure 2).

9. Description of Project:

Add a protective wall and extend the roof of the clubhouse with a 12'X120' lean-to cover on the eastside.

- This will require: the pouring of an 8'X10' concrete pad by the west door.
- Removing seamless rain gutter and down-spouts on East side of Club house and reinstall the gutters after construction of the extended roof (See Figure 3).
- Installation of 16 concrete piers 4' deep and 12" in diameter to support 6"X6"X8' treated timber posts (See Figure 4).
- All other materials, labor, and equipment will be in-kind match from the club which includes the associated wall and roof.

10. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:

None

(a) Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
N/A		

Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
In-Kind Labor	\$ 3,744.00
In-Kind Equipment & Materials	\$ 6,920.00
Conrad Gun Club	\$ 700.00
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$ 8,494.89

11. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups: The shooting Club will be open to the public for shooting events, meetings, workshops, etc. Additionally, members of the public may purchase a membership which allows them to utilize the facilities for individual shooting. Membership fees will help pay for utilities, insurance, and other ongoing expenses. Additional fundraisers will fund the rest of the ongoing operating costs. League shooting is made up of team members from Conrad, Valier, Dupuyer, Choteau, and Shelby, Montana. User organizations include: Conrad Gun Club, Pondera Valley Rifle League, Archery Club, Pondera Sheriff's Department, Hunter Education, Pondera 4-H, FFA Club, and the Boy Scouts. Additionally the Conrad Police Department has shown interested in using the range for shotgun training.

12. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement: Proposed range improvements and safety enhancements had been discussed within the membership of the club and with the associated project vendors and contractors.

13. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

14. Names, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:
Marliss Picard, 20 N. Kansas St. Conrad, MT 59425 (406) 271-2137

15. Other Pertinent Information:

Shooting range applications require the participant's governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range-funding assistance. Resolution Date: April 2, 2011.

PART II. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES

The proposed alternative A, alternative B and the no action alternative were considered.

- **Alternative A (Proposed Alternative)** is as described in Part I, paragraph 9 (Description of Project). Add a protective wall and extend the roof of the clubhouse.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Shooting Range Development Grant money would be denied and the area will remain as an active shooting range without improvements proposed.

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented: Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent. Neither the proposed alternative nor the no action alternative would have significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

There are beneficial consequences to acceptance of the **Proposed Alternative (A)** Add a protective wall and extend the roof of the clubhouse.

The **No Action Alternative (B)** would be to not fund the improvements and the range will continue on with present conditions. Land use would remain the same.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:
NONE

List and explain proposed mitigating measures (stipulations): NONE

PART III. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Abbreviated Checklist – The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmental sensitive areas.

Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		#2
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		#5
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		#9
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		

Comments (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

2. & 5. There are neither surface waters nor delineated wetlands on the range.

9. This project uses no federal funds nor does it take place on state owned or controlled property; therefore, the Federal 106 Regulations and the State Antiques Act do not apply.

Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				X		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				X		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				X		
4. Agricultural production				X		
5. Human health				X		
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				X		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				X		
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				X		
10. Demands for government services				X		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

Comments (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

PART IV. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the project reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being implemented are already on an existing range/altere areas that together with the insignificant environmental effects of the proposed action, indicates that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative. The Pondera Shooting Sports Club's proposed alternative, to improve their range facilities and to provide a safe regulated shooting opportunity is supported by its members and the public. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative (A) for the improvements as outlined in Part I, Para. 9.

PART V. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur? NO

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant? This proposed action has no impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:

There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative; therefore an EIS is not required.

PART VI. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:

Marliss Picard, 20 N. Kansas St. Conrad, MT 59425
MT Fish Wildlife and Parks

EA prepared by: GENE R. HICKMAN
MS Wildlife Management
Ecological Assessments
Helena, MT 59602

Date Completed: July 28, 2011

Describe public involvement, if any:

This draft EA will be advertised on FWP's web site and through a legal ad in the Independent Observer announcing a public comment period. A press release will also announce the project and comment period.